

Peppermint Chocolate Cheesecake

SERVES 18 TO 20

During the Christmas holidays, I love to serve hot chocolate with a peppermint stick. The combination of chocolate and mint works well in this cheesecake, too.

Tips

If candy canes are difficult to find, I use the round red and white wrapped mints.

To crush candy canes, place them in a sealable plastic bag and pound with a meat pounder until crushed to desired coarseness.

Variation

Use white chocolate chunks instead of semisweet.

- Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C)
- 10-inch (25 cm) cheesecake pan or springform pan with 3-inch (7.5 cm) sides

Crust

2 cups	Chocolate Cookie Crumbs (page 25) or store-bought	500 mL
1/3 cup	unsalted butter, melted	75 mL

Filling

2 1/2 lbs	cream cheese, softened	1.25 kg
1 cup	sour cream	250 mL
2 cups	granulated sugar	500 mL
6	large eggs, at room temperature	6
6 oz	semisweet chocolate, melted (see page 93) and cooled	175 g
2/3 cup	all-purpose flour, divided	150 mL
2 tsp	vanilla extract	10 mL
1/2 tsp	peppermint extract	2 mL
12 oz	semisweet chocolate chunks	375 g
1 cup	crushed candy canes (see Tips, at left)	250 mL

Decoration

1/4 cup	Classic Whipped Cream Topping (page 360) crushed candy canes	60 mL
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1. **Crust:** In a bowl, combine cookie crumbs and butter. Press into bottom of cheesecake pan and freeze.
2. **Filling:** In a mixer bowl fitted with paddle attachment, beat cream cheese, sour cream and sugar on medium-high speed until very smooth, about 3 minutes. Add eggs, one at a time, beating after each addition. With the mixer running, pour in melted chocolate in a steady stream. Stir in 1/2 cup (125 mL) of the flour, vanilla and peppermint extract. In a small bowl, coat chocolate chunks and candy canes with the remaining flour. Fold into batter by hand.
3. Pour over frozen crust, smoothing out to sides of pan. Bake in preheated oven until top is light brown and center has a slight jiggle to it, 60 to 75 minutes. Let cool in pan on a wire rack for 2 hours. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 6 hours before decorating or serving.
4. **Decoration:** Ice top of cake with Classic Whipped Cream Topping or pipe a ribbon around border, if desired. Top with crushed candy canes.